

# Truvo integrates .NET sales system and more with LANSA



Truvo Belgium is the market leader in local search and advertising and publishes the printed and online Golden and White Pages phone directories. Since 1994, Truvo has used LANSA for its core System i Golden Pages information system and has more recently integrated a .NET sales application, used by over 400 sales representatives, via LANSA Web services. The printed guides are also prepared on the System i and delivered to the printers in XML format using LANSA Integrator.

**Gunter Gheysens**, IT development manager at Truvo Belgium, says, "Using LANSA Integrator and Web services we can use best of breed systems in the back office, in the graphics department and on the sales representative's laptops and integrate them all seamlessly. LANSA's easy business process integration lets us quickly grasp business opportunities and provide a better service to the customer."

## A Massive and Complex Operation

Truvo publishes the online and printed Golden and White Pages phone directories in Belgium. This includes ten regional editions, 27 local Zoom guides and two Mobilo guides for mobile users. The company prints and distributes nearly 4.5 million sets of guides each year and its Web sites have nearly 1.9 million unique visitors monthly. The guides are also available on CD, DVD and Digital TV. And recently via an MSN chatbot.

Every company in Belgium is in the Golden Pages, even the small corner store. While standard listings are free, there are 125,000 customers who pay for extra services.

"It is a massive and complex operation," explains Gheysens. "Contacting and visiting customers, collecting data and checking it

for accuracy, arranging the information and advertisements into sections, publishing to various media and distributing the printed guides to every telephone subscriber."

"Truvo employs 400 sales staff who advise on circulation, market information, available advertising options and pricing. There are nearly 50 fulltime graphic designers and over 20 staff to check content. We have always used IBM hardware and evolved from IBM S/36, to S/38 to AS/400 and now System i."

"Initially we developed in RPG, but in 1994 we started using LANSA. This worked out so well we now do all new development in LANSA. Nowadays, our core system is LANSA-based and RPG is used less and less."

"To support our sales staff, we also use a .NET solution called ProPricing/Profolio

that was developed for us by a third party. Initially this solution was mostly used for price calculations as advertising scenarios can be quite complex, but over the years it has grown. Last year we decided to take maintenance of the .NET solution in-house, so we can respond faster to business requirements."

"Contract information, advertisement specifications and other customer details needed to be shared between traveling sales staff and the back office. So we wanted a fast and secure way to exchange information between the .NET solution on the sales rep's laptop and our core production systems on the System i."

"An SOA approach using Web services was the obvious way to go. After a disappointing experience with a Java-based BPI tool, we selected LANSA Integrator. Now all our Web services are built in LANSA," says Gheysens.

**"Quick exchange of contracts and specifications has sped up fulfillment."**

## Smooth Exchange of Information

The enhanced sales solution is based on individual customer dossiers that are assembled in XML on the System i with LANSA Integrator and then assigned by the sales manager to a sales rep for downloading to their laptop. Because the majority of the information is kept in the downloaded customer dossier, the rep can work off-line.

From the dossiers, sales staff have a complete view in ProPricing of all their customers, including existing contracts, forecasted sales, recent contact notes, last year's advertisements and other supporting documents.

Based on the available information and on new input from the customer, the sales rep can build a number of new advertising scenarios with appropriate pricing and present these to the customer.

When the customer selects a scenario, the sales contract and advertisement specifications are created in ProPricing and uploaded by Profolio to the System i via a LANSA Web service which parses it into the DB2 database for further processing by the back office system. Some information, such as logos and graphics, can also be delivered manually by email or post. →



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The graphics department then works on the advertisement based on the specifications and instructions that are kept on the System i. The real graphical design work is done on their Macintosh computers and the resulting advertisement is stored on Truvo's UNIX server in postscript and PDF format. When finished, the customer gets a printed proof of what he has bought for approval.

Recently, a LANSA Web service was used to dynamically create a URL that links to a PDF of last year's graphic advertisements that is stored on the UNIX machine. The sales rep can browse these PDFs online or use a fast FTP connection to download them to their laptop.

"If the graphical advertisement stays the same, it can be quickly reused and the sales rep can focus on the other changes the customer wants. All this has improved the contract turnaround time, which is a great benefit to the customer and Truvo," says Gheysens.

Preparation of the printed guides and directories also happens on the System i. The directory data is pre-paginated with LANSA-based software and delivered in XML format by LANSA Integrator to the printer.

### Easy Business Process Integration

"Smooth exchange of information between the System i and the sales representative's laptop has helped them conduct an efficient and productive meeting with customers," explains Gheysens.

"The sales rep can quickly show a number of advertisement scenarios to the customer and provide accurate pricing on the spot."

"Once the sales rep has closed the sale, the contract is uploaded and parsed to the System i via a LANSA Integrator Web service where the information is used to handle all further back office processes."

"The quick exchange of the sales contract and advertisement specifications has sped up fulfillment and helps support our customer focused approach."

"LANSA's stability and performance are crucial in our demanding environment with massive databases and complex processes. The System i can handle the heavy load easily."

"Developing Web services with LANSA is quick and production performance is also good. We taught ourselves how to build Web



*The Truvo Golden Pages team (from left to right): Back row – Leo Gorree, Gert Verhaeren, Christian Met, Karel Favresse, Griet Peeters and Chris Fransen. Front row – Gunter Gheysens (IT development manager and architect) and Martine Proost.*

services, with just a bit of help from a LANSA consultant. So it didn't take long before we could create them on our own."

"LANSA makes it easy to map data and create links. In Java, even if you have a script, there is still a lot of coding. LANSA Integrator is our path forward for all Web services."

"If you want to stay in the game in this industry, you have to be able to adapt quickly and use every window of opportunity. That is not always easy when you use packaged solutions or outsource development. That is why we want to be in control of our business critical applications."

"Easy business process integration with LANSA Integrator and Web services lets us seamlessly integrate best of breed back office systems. We can quickly grasp business opportunities and provide better service."

"LANSA provides magnificent products for development and integration. Having experimented with other integration tools and maintaining the .NET based solution ourselves, we can compare and realize the enormous amount of work LANSA does underneath the covers. The speed of coding and the simplicity LANSA provides is exceptional. After a few weeks of training you can be quite productive."

**"LANSA Integrator is our path forward for all Web services."**

### Staying Number One

"We want to stay number one in Belgium for all local search and advertising facilities, both in print and online," says Gheysens.

"We want to help our customers to be easily found by their customers. We want to provide the best possible services to support their business. We want to differentiate ourselves from the competitors in both quality and quantity of information. That is our aim."

"As an IT department you don't always have the time and the budget to take a step back and improve the architecture of your IT systems before you bolt on new business functionality. We are still a long way from implementing an SOA environment, but every Web service is a step in the right direction."

"Today we only use Web services between our internal business systems, but in the future we may want to give customer access to some parts of their data. The architecture that we are establishing now with LANSA Integrator allows for that," concludes Gheysens ■

### COMPANY AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

- Truvo Belgium, named Promedia until September 2007, is Belgium's leading local search and advertising provider. Truvo Belgium's head office is located in Antwerp and it has several regional offices through the country. With a volume of 4.5 million copies, the printed Golden Pages directory is the most widely distributed reference work in Belgium. The online versions attract nearly 1.9 million unique visitors every month. Truvo's directories are also available on CD, DVD, Digital TV and via an MSN Chatbot. Truvo Belgium employs 800 people. For more information visit: [www.truvo.be](http://www.truvo.be)
- Truvo Belgium uses a System i model 530 which regional offices access via leased lines. The Golden Pages IT team consists of six business analysts, eight LANSA developers, two .NET developers and four quality control staff. Operational support is done by a separate division.